

OF JORDAN
SERIALS
NUMBER ONE

U.N. continues hunt in Iraq

BAGHDAD (R) — Arms experts combed Iraq for hidden nuclear activity split into several groups Tuesday to inspect as many sites as possible. United Nations sources said. The 24 inspectors left their Baghdad hotel and drove in four different directions, the sources added. The team leader, Dimitri Pericos, said a group of nuclear specialists had been visiting engineering plants to check for activities prohibited by Gulf war ceasefire terms. "A group has been going around and visiting different state establishments for engineering," said the Greek expert from the International Atomic Energy Agency. Mr. Pericos said some teams had carried out short-notice inspections and a small group had spent five days deep in the Western allies' exclusion zone in northern Iraq. "They visited four facilities up there. They gathered whatever results they have and now they'll be evaluated to see what we can get out of it." Mr. Pericos and his team arrived in Baghdad on Wednesday. He described his findings so far as "both positive and negative. Negative when you think that something is there and there is nothing, positive when you think there is something there and you find it."

Iraq demands end to spy flights, page 2

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Cairo appoints counsellor to Iraq

AMMAN (AP) — Egypt is sending a career diplomat to Baghdad to upgrade its representation there after a strain in ties that followed Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, an Egyptian embassy official said Tuesday. Rida Abdul Karim, a diplomat at the Foreign Ministry in Cairo who previously served in Czechoslovakia, will travel Wednesday to Baghdad to assume his post as counsellor, said the official, who insisted on anonymity. Egypt withdrew its diplomats from Baghdad after the August 1990 invasion of Kuwait, leaving only two administrative attachés. In an interest section at the Indian embassy, Egypt is only the second member of the U.S.-led anti-Iraq coalition that has decided to upgrade its representation in Baghdad since the 1991 Gulf war. Turkey sent a counsellor to Iraq earlier this month to reopen its embassy there.

Qatar denies reconciliation effort

DUBAI (R) — Qatar denied Tuesday it was trying to reconcile Kuwait and Iraq and said its contacts with the two were aimed at securing the release of Kuwaitis believed to be held in Iraq. The official Qatari News Agency (QNA) quoted Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassim Ben Jaber Al Thani as saying Qatar "was trying to secure the release of Kuwaiti prisoners ... it is not specifically direct mediation to normalise ties between the two countries." Press reports in the region said in the past week Kuwait had rejected a Qatari effort to mediate between Kuwait and Iraq. Sheikh Hamad said Doha had undertaken the "humanitarian effort on the occasion of the blessed month of Ramadan." Qatar has sent its ambassador back to Baghdad. Most other Gulf Arab states have shunned any contacts since the end of the Gulf war.

Palestinians strike in Syria

DAMASCUS (R) — Palestinians in refugee camps in Syria went on strike on Tuesday in protest against the Arab-Israeli peace talks. A Palestinian source told Reuter students in all Palestinian schools stayed away from classes. Signs in the streets called on Palestinian negotiators to withdraw from the peace talks and demanded the return home of 400 Palestinians expelled by Israel to South Lebanon.

Still, Mr. Christopher and Russian Foreign Minister Andrei

U.S. to issue invitations soon to Arabs, Israel for resumed talks April 20

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Arabs and Israel will be asked to resume their suspended peace talks in Washington on April 20 in invitations to be issued in a few days, Clinton administration officials said Tuesday.

Only the participation of the Palestinians has not been assured. They have objected to terms reached by the United States and Israel for the repatriation of 396 Palestinian expellees now in Lebanon.

The invitations will be issued by the co-sponsors, the United States and Russia. The last round ended here in mid-December with some progress in Israel's talks with both Syria and Jordan.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher, in his first overseas trip, urged leaders in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Israel as well as the Palestinians to return to the table.

He reported afterwards a commitment to the peace process from all sides. But he did not get a specific pledge from the Palestinians to resume talks with Israel on limited self-rule on the West Bank and Gaza.

It said the State Department had decided on the date and had

Kozhrev decided in Geneva, Switzerland, on Feb. 25 to go ahead with invitations.

Administration officials, insisting on anonymity, told the Associated Press Tuesday they hoped the Palestinians would be present.

The Syrians are known to be eager to resume talks with Israel because they hold promise of regaining part, if not all, of the Golan Heights.

Israel is demanding peace from Syria as a precondition to "territorial compromise."

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is due here on Friday and will meet with President Bill Clinton next Tuesday.

"We are working together," Mr. Clinton said at a news conference Tuesday. "I feel very confident that the peace process back on track."

Israel television said later that the peace talks will resume in Washington on April 19.

In an unsourced report, Israel Television said invitations to the U.S.-brokered talks would be sent on Wednesday to all parties in the negotiations.

It said the State Department had decided on the date and had

(Continued on page 5)

Efforts to revive talks deadlocked — Abdul Shafi

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The chief Palestinian peace negotiator said Tuesday efforts to revive Middle East talks were deadlocked over Israel's refusal to commit itself to refrain from future expulsions.

"The most important point for us is that Israel commit itself not to carry out (expulsions) in the future," Dr. Haidar Abdul Shafi, head of the negotiating team, told Reuters.

"(Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak) Rabin insists on reserving the right to (expel) people," he said. Asked if that meant efforts to revive the Washington talks were deadlocked, Dr. Abdul Shafi said: "Yes."

U.S.-brokered Arab-Israeli negotiations have been frozen since December when Mr. Rabin expelled 415 Palestinians to Lebanon. Palestinians are demanding Israel take back all the expellees and announce it will refrain from future expulsions.

Palestinians said they reached a six-point understanding with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher during his visit to the region last month but that Mr. Rabin rejected the wording of the proposal.

Dr. Abdul Shafi said his team would not return to Washington — even if the United States

issued invitations to resume the talks — unless the crisis was resolved. Mr. Christopher has said he plans to issue invitations for April.

Saeed Erekat, a member of the Palestinian negotiating team, said Mr. Rabin wants the Palestinians to announce readiness to return to the negotiating table before making any overtures on future expulsions.

"We still do not know what kind of commitment he is willing to make," Dr. Erekat told Reuters Tuesday. "We cannot buy the fish before we see it."

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak Tuesday received a message from Mr. Rabin and an Egyptian minister expressed hope for a satisfactory solution to the expelled problem.

David Sultan, Israel's new ambassador to Egypt, delivered the message after presenting his credentials to Mr. Mubarak.

Foreign Minister Ami Musa, who attended the meeting, told reporters afterwards that the message dealt with "outstanding matters between the two countries and the Middle East peace process."

Neither he nor Mr. Sultan would disclose details of the mes-

(Continued on page 5)

Britain holds top-level discussions with PLO

LONDON (Agencies) — The British government restored high-level contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Tuesday after a gap of more than two years but failed to gain a Palestinian pledge to return to the stalled Middle East peace talks.

Foreign Office Minister Douglas Hogg met two PLO officials and Faisal Al Husseini, head of the Palestinian peace talks delegation. He said investigators had questioned the crew of 44 Indian nationals and a Sri Lankan and seized documents from the empty Taftan, which left Iran's Kharg Island on Feb. 24 for repairs in Singapore.

Arab Bank clarifies stand

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Arab

Bank Tuesday issued a statement clarifying its position vis-a-vis its presence in the occupied West Bank. "Over five years ago the Arab Bank applied to reopen its branches there but the conditions of the occupiers were and still are unacceptable to the Arab Bank and this has precluded us from reopening our branches in the West Bank," the bank said.

But he added: "I am optimistic. I believe that by more work

we can ... solve the problem of the deportees."

Mr. Hogg supported the Palestinian view on the expellees.

"The future use of the deportation weapon would be extremely undesirable," he told the British Broadcasting Corporation.

"Further movement on the question of deportation would greatly facilitate their ability to come back into the talks," he added.

It was the first meeting by a British government minister with the PLO since the Gulf war. Britain cut off ministerial contacts because PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat supported Iraq.

Mr. Hogg said Britain decided to end the boycott in the hopes of persuading the Palestinians to resume the peace talks because Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was the leader most likely to make a lasting agreement.

Israel protested about the meeting, saying Britain had handed the PLO a prize.

"I believe there are good intentions behind it but I am afraid it may harm the (peace) process," Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin said in a BBC radio interview before the meeting.

But he added: "I am optimistic. I believe that by more work

Exiles say intifada will be escalated

MARI AL ZOHOUR, Lebanon (R) — Palestinian exiles said Tuesday the uprising in the occupied territories fueled by their expulsion would increase until "the land burns under the feet of the occupiers."

Abdul Aziz Al Rantisi, leader of the 396 men stranded in South Lebanon for 11 weeks, said Palestinians had the right to resist the Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank by all necessary means.

Israeli-Palestinian violence has surged since the December 17 expulsions. Israelis have killed 54 Palestinians and Palestinians have killed eight Israelis.

On Monday, Palestinians killed the fourth Israeli in a week and two Palestinians were shot dead.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin ordered the expulsion of the Palestinians, alleged to be linked to militant groups, after six Israelis were killed in a week in December.

"After our (expulsion) there was an increase in the level of violence against the occupiers," Dr. Rantisi told reporters at the muddy tent camp. "The Palestinian people's heroic resistance will continue and they will resist more and more."

"The land will burn under the feet of the occupiers."

Dr. Rantisi said Palestinians were fed up with the Israeli occupation, which he described as the worst kind of slavery. "International law guarantees our right to resist the occupiers by any necessary means."

He said he found "very strange" a statement by U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali in which he condemned the recent killings of Israeli civilians and denied allegations in the Israeli media that the United Nations was less concerned over violence against Jews than against others.

Boutros-Ghali's statement equalised between the occupier and the occupied, he said.

The statement said "acts of violence — whether by Israelis against Palestinians or Palestinians against Israelis — only serve to undermine the confidence and trust required by the peace process."

The exiles want the full implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 799, issued one day after their banishment, which demands Israel take them back immediately.

But on Tuesday they did not seem to be in a hurry.

"The longer we stay here the

(Continued on page 5)



Palestinian boys hurl rocks at an Israeli army jeep in the occupied Gaza Strip Tuesday (AFP photo)

FBI says 'large group' behind World Trade Centre bombing

WASHINGTON (Agencies) —

A Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) official told Congress Tuesday he believes that a "large, well known terrorist group" bombed New York's Trade Centre, but his director said it likely does not signal a coming wave of terrorism in the United States.

James Fox, head of the FBI's New York office, said it was his "gut feeling" that the Feb. 26 bombing was "a terrorist incident organised by a large, well-known terrorist group."

He did not identify the organisation but said, "it is a group that knows what they're doing. This was not a group of ad hoc terrorists."

Mr. Fox and FBI Director William Sessions testified before a

congressional sub-committee

looking into the possibility that the bombing is the first of a new wave of attacks against the United States. Five people were killed in the bombing and 1,000 injured.

"The American public should always be vigilant, but this suspected act of terrorism should not be viewed as the opening act in a coming wave of terrorism," Mr. Sessions said.

He said the last "international terrorist activity on U.S. soil" occurred last April, when Iranian opposition organisation took over the Iranian mission to the United Nations in New York.

"Prior to that incident, there had not been an international terrorism attack in the United

States since 1983," Mr. Sessions said.

According to FBI statistics, there have been 163 attacks on the United States since 1902, most of them domestic incidents in Puerto Rico by Puerto Ricans. Mr. Sessions said.

Mr. Sessions' assessment differed from that of the sub-committee chairman, Representative Charles E. Schumer, who earlier warned that the trade centre bombing and the killing of two Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) employees in a Washington suburb could be the first violence in a new wave of terrorism in this country.

"The question is not whether

(Continued on page 5)

PLO, Hamas resume talks; basic differences remain

By Marianne M. Shahin

Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A dialogue between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Hamas resumed in Amman this week with high-level meetings between Jordan-based Hamas leaders and the PLO official Abbas Zaki.

Two meetings, one held Monday and one Saturday, revolved around the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 799 and "coordination" between the PLO and Hamas.

"We have been discussing two issues which we agree upon which is 799 and developments in the occupied territories," said Hamas representative in Jordan Mohammad Nazzal. "Cooperation between Hamas and the PLO in the occupied territories was discussed," Mr. Nazzal told the Jordan Times.

Neither Mr. Nazzal nor Mr. Zaki would discuss the nature of cooperation between the two groups.

"The talks have not yielded

fruit yet and therefore I prefer not to make announcements about the nature of our dialogue."

Said Mr. Zaki, a leading figure in the mainstream Fatah faction.

But relations between the PLO and Hamas remain strained as a result of Hamas' overtures to foreign governments over the Dec. 17 expulsion of some 400 Palestinians who are largely affiliated to Hamas as well as the Islamic Jihad.

"Right now the PLO is really not very happy with Hamas," said a Tunis-based PLO official who has sat in on some of the PLO-Hamas talks.

"As the representatives of the Palestinian people we are responsible for those evictions in South Lebanon and we have made major diplomatic overtures on their behalf," said the official, speaking to the Jordan Times on condition of anonymity.

"There was no need for Hamas to appeal and meet with foreign diplomats over this issue," said the official in an angry tone.

(Continued on page 5)

Rome cabinet will not resign, minister says

ROME (Agencies) — The Italian

government will not resign despite a political uproar over its attempts to change a crucial corruption law. Foreign Trade Minister Claudio Vitalone said on

condition of anonymity.

He said he found "very strange" a statement by U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali in which he condemned the recent killings of Israeli civilians and denied allegations in the Israeli media that the United Nations was less concerned over violence against Jews than against others.

Cabinet Secretary Fabio Fabbri told reporters at the end of a two-hour cabinet meeting that Prime Minister Giuliano Amato would present a parliamentary amendment to change the law.

Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, bitherto Mr. Amato's staunchest political supporters, refused to push the proposal through by decree Sunday, severely embarrassing Mr. Amato and promoting opposition calls for his resignation.

The exiles want the full implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 799, issued one day after their banishment, which demands Israel take them back immediately.

Washington to seek to free \$50 million in aid to Jordan

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The Clinton administration will soon seek to release \$50 million in assistance funds to Jordan, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Edward Djerejian said Monday.

Mr. Djerejian, discussing the Middle East peace process and U.S. assistance programme for the region with the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee's subcommittee on Foreign Operations, paid tribute to the democratisation process under way in Jordan.

He also said Jordan was enforcing the sanctions against Iraq with "utmost vigour."

Mr. Djerejian also reviewed the outcome of the recent visit to the Middle East by Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

In Jordan, Mr. Djerejian said:

"In Amman, the secretary noted substantial progress towards democratisation and King Hussein's commitment to protection of human rights. Jordan is taking concrete steps towards economic reform and a strengthened free market economy. Of course, Jordan has been a key participant in the peace process and we look forward to its continued positive role. King Hussein also assured the secretary that Jordan would continue to adhere to U.N. sanctions against Iraq."

"To support Jordan's positive role in the peace process and its adherence to U.N. sanctions, we will recommend soon to the secretary that he release the remaining \$50 million in fiscal year 1992 security assistance funds. We will, of course, discuss our plans with you and other members of Congress before disbursement."

The Clinton administration remains committed to continuing "significant aid levels to Israel and Egypt," Mr. Djerejian said.

"Both President Clinton and Secretary Christopher have gone on record regarding the importance of continuing aid to Israel and Egypt at current levels," Mr. Djerejian said.

"We remain steadfast in our commitment to direct substantial foreign aid resources to the security of Israel, to support for Egypt's vital role in the stability and security of the region, and to the promotion of comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East," he stressed.

Mr. Djerejian noted that "because of declining overall levels," assistance programme to Egypt and Israel "have grown from 70 per cent of total U.S. security assistance in the late 1980s to almost 85 per cent in fiscal year 1993."

Mr. Djerejian asked the Congress to support the resumption of "accepting a number of Lebanese officers and enlisted personnel for training" in the United States. "A key to the extension of government authority throughout the country is the maintenance of strong Lebanese Armed Forces," he said.

Several members of the subcommittee questioned whether U.S. aid to Lebanon would eventually end up in "Syrian hands."

"In no way, in our assessment, is money going to any third country. It's going to Lebanon, and it's going to very viable purposes to support our policy of helping Lebanon restructure its economy, its armed forces..." Mr. Djerejian said.

In terms of the provision to

Lebanon of excess military equipment, the United States has obtained assurances from the Lebanese government and commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces that strict accountability for all material will be provided," he added.

In regards to assistance to Jordan, Mr. Djerejian said "Jordan's positive role in the peace process and its adherence to U.N. sanctions" against Iraq are "noteworthy." He praised Jordan for enforcing the sanctions against Iraq "with utmost rigor."

"Jordan needs our support," Mr. Djerejian stressed.

On the peace process, he said: "Since the eighth round of negotiations adjourned in mid-December, there has been a hiatus in the negotiations. President Clinton sent Secretary Christopher to the Middle East last month not only to reenergise and reactivate the peace talks, but also to assess the determination and commitment of the parties to the goal of a negotiated peace."

The president and secretary especially wanted to emphasise the commitment of the United States to a full partnership role in this complex and difficult process, if, and this is important, the parties come to the table prepared to engage in serious and meaningful negotiations in order to narrow the substantive differences between them.

"Much work needs to be done. Not only are the substantive positions between the parties still far apart, but the political environment has been made more difficult by the resurgence of violence directed against Israel by terrorists and by the deportation of

Hamas activists."

Muslim leader who threatened Rushdie will not be prosecuted

LONDON (AP) — Government lawyers have decided not to prosecute a prominent British Muslim who in a radio interview about Salman Rushdie threatened: "We will...break every bone to his body."

Announcing the decision not to prosecute Kalim Siddiqui, the lord chancellor, Lord MacKay, the head of the judiciary, Monday told the House of Lords, the unelected upper house of parliament:

"The crown prosecution service...has concluded that the contents (of the interview) taken as a whole are not such as would afford a realistic prospect of conviction for incitement to murder or any other offence."

Mr. Siddiqui is leader of the Muslim Parliament, an unelected organisation set up last year to defend Islamic interests in Britain. Moderate British Muslims say it is unrepresentative and British politicians have denounced it as separatist.

Mr. Siddiqui backed the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini when the Iranian spiritual leader called on Feb. 14, 1989 for Muslims to kill Mr. Rushdie for his novel "The Satanic Verses."

Mr. Rushdie, who was born in India but took British nationality, has been in hiding guarded by armed British police since Ayatollah Khomeini issued his death threat.

Mr. Siddiqui said in the interview with the London Broadcasting Company (LBC) last month: "I don't want to kill him. We will just break every bone in his body." But Mr. Siddiqui said afterwards that his remark was not meant literally.

Several members of the lords criticised the decision not to prosecute Mr. Siddiqui.

Lord Cleddyn, a member of the opposition Labour Party and a former cabinet minister, said: "If a Christian behaved in a Muslim country as Dr. Siddiqui has behaved there, he would find himself in serious trouble."

There are an estimated two million Muslims in Britain, Ayatollah Khomeini issued his death call after Muslims in Bradford, a city in northern England with a large immigrant Asian population, burned "The Satanic Verses" in a demonstration against the author.

"Iran, in many ways, is like Iraq at the early stages of the Iraqi programme. That is a shop 'till you drop strategy essentially. Trying to acquire technical skills, training, technology and man-

Iraq demands U.S. stop spy plane flights

NICOSIA (AP) — Iraq Monday demanded that the United States stop flying U-2 spy plane missions over its territory and claimed they were used to help an Israeli hit squad that was trying to assassinate Saddam Hussein.

The official Iraqi News Agency (INA), monitored in Cyprus, said the demand was contained in a message sent by Foreign Minister Mohammad Saeed Al Sahafi to U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali.

He told Mr. Ghali that the United Nations ought to stop the flights "because these planes are being used for purposes other than those the Security Council specified."

This week's edition of the Lon-

don-based Sunday Times reported that Israeli intelligence operated in western Iraq during reconnaissance missions behind enemy lines. The Sunday Times said: "The report was based on unnamed sources."

The newspaper's front-page story also said the five Israeli soldiers killed by a stray missile during a training exercise as recently as November 1992 were rehearsing to assassinate President Saddam.

Previous reports have said the soldiers were training to kill Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of the Lebanese Shiite Muslim fundamentalist group Hizbullah.

The Israeli soldiers involved in both the assassination plot against President Saddam and the

bunt for Scud missiles belonged to Sayeret Matkal, a branch of military intelligence specialising in reconnaissance missions behind enemy lines. The Sunday Times said: "The report was based on unnamed sources."

Mr. Sahaf said the U-2 flights "threaten the sovereignty and security of Iraq." He pointed out that his government already had sent 59 letters to Mr. Ghali complaining of 118 "violations of Iraqi airspace" by the American spy planes.

It was the first time any connection has been alleged between the U-2 overflights and the reported Israeli operation aimed at killing President Saddam.

Washington welcomes Afghan peace pact

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States Monday welcomed a peace accord in Afghanistan that it said was a move towards a broad-based government, even though the agreement elevates to prime minister a bardine fundamentalist Washington has considered an extremist.

All the warring Afghan leaders signed a peace accord in Pakistan Sunday to end the months of fighting that has killed thousands in Kabul since last April, when the Mujahideen overthrew the former communist government.

Under the agreement, fundamentalist President Burhanuddin Rahmani remains head of state for 18 months from last December, the date of his election by an assembly of nationwide representatives.

The radical Hezb-e-Islami party formally announced its hard-line leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Mr. Rahmani's arch enemy, would take up the position of prime minister.

"We welcome any signs of progress. We always supported the establishment of a broad-based government in Afghanistan that can bring peace to that area," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher told reporters.

He called the peace accord "a positive step forward" but added that "we also look for the establishment of a broad-based government that can really solve the differences."

Asked to comment about Mr. Hekmatyar getting the prime minister's post, Mr. Boucher said:

"I don't think I want to comment on particular individuals, but, as said, the more broad the representation and support for a government can be, the more likely it is to be able to resolve the fighting and the conflict out there."

In the 1980s, Mr. Hekmatyar's group received a large portion of the millions of dollars in U.S. aid that was funnelled through Pakistan to the Mujahideen fighting what was then the Soviet-backed regime in Kabul.

But he was increasingly viewed as a radical who was opposed to the United States. During the 1991 Gulf war, Mr. Hekmatyar backed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Asked if the new Clinton administration viewed Mr. Hekmatyar as the extremist he was considered to be by the Bush administration, Mr. Boucher said:

"The leaders of the government and the way they go forward is up to the Afghans to decide. I think when Hekmatyar had unleashed fighting against the capital, we've been clear to criticise that, and we have urged him and others to participate in the government to resolve these differences and to bring peace to Afghanistan. So that continues to be the position of the United States."

Former CIA director says Iran could have nuclear arms by 2000

LONDON (AP) — Iran could acquire nuclear weapons by the year 2000 or even sooner, former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director Robert Gates said in an interview broadcast Monday night.

He said the United States had "sufficient evidence" that Iran was pursuing a nuclear weapons programme — not a peaceful nuclear weapons programme as Dr. Reza Amrollahi, head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation, claimed.

Factory managers refused to appear on camera and denied a deal had been struck during the visit last August, the BBC said.

Iran also bought more than £2 million (\$2.9 million) of equipment from the Hungarian firm, Lampart, which makes glass enamel-lined reactors, according to the BBC.

The BBC said these reactors are capable of handling the potential chemical reactions employed in the manufacture of mustard gas and nerve agents. But Lampart's commercial director, identified only as Mrs. Fonyai, said the equipment was "not correct" for chemical weapons.

Mr. Gates said the United States does have evidence of an Iranian chemical weapons programme.

Tehran's programme, he said, "includes choking, blister and blood agents in the chemical weapons arena. The estimates of their stockpile range from a few hundred tonnes up to 2,000 tonnes of chemical stockpile."

Like Iraq, the BBC said, Iran has purchased dual-use technology from Germany.

The Sharif University of Technology and other Iranian institutions approached several German firms in an attempt to buy specialised magnets used in centrifuges including Magnefabrik of Boun, the BBC said.

Magnefabrik confirmed an order to Iran but refused to say what it was for, the BBC said. The German engineering firm Leybold supplied a vacuum pump to a university in Tehran and the

Carl Schenck company supplied a balancing machine to Sharif University after it was told it was for educational purposes, the BBC said.

Dr. Kay said these three items would be key elements in a centrifuge process, the most modern way to enrich uranium to weapons-grade.

If anyone concerned about nuclear proliferation heard this list, he said, "their eyes would light up and the hair would literally stand on the back of your neck."

The Iranians have been thwarted in two attempted purchases.

Last month, U.S. officials stopped the shipment of an IBM ES 9000 computer, which can be used in the manufacture of nuclear weapons.

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Militias surrender 7 to Lebanese army

BEIRUT (AP) — Prime Minister Rafik Hariri sent the army into the south Beirut slums last December, the first time in a decade that the government had even tried to assert its control there.

High-profile demonstrations of its authority were crucial to show that the government will not tolerate dissent.

Since the end of the civil war in October 1990, the government has disarmed all the major militias except Hizbullah.

The Hizbullah-backed movement refuses to hand over its weapons, claiming it needs them to fight the Israelis who occupy a border strip in South Lebanon — an argument the Beirut government finds it difficult to counter.

Saturday's firefights erupted out of an argument between Hizbullah and Amal activists. The two movements fought each other between 1987 and 1990 for control of Lebanon's 1.2 million Shiites,

the country's largest since sect.

Two years ago, they signed a peace treaty arranged by Syria and Iran. But ideological differences still run deep and a resurgence of the intra-Shiite conflict would seriously undermine the Arab League-brokered agreement that ended the civil war and erode the credibility of Mr. Hariri's government.

For Mr. Hariri, reestablishing firm government control of the southern slums has significance far beyond domestic politics.

The slums, long a Hizbullah stronghold, are widely seen abroad as a haven for suicide bombers and hostage takers.

Restoring government authority there is vital to Mr. Hariri's efforts to show that Lebanon is no longer a terrorist sanctuary and to encourage badly needed investment from outside to help post-war reconstruction.

Mr. Siddiqui said in the interview with the London Broadcasting Company (LBC) last month: "I don't want to kill him. We will just break every bone in his body." But Mr. Siddiqui said afterwards that his remark was not meant literally.

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JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 73111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 52 Sur La Une
19:00 News in French
19:15 Classical Music
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Stories by the Bell
21:00 Spotlights
21:30 After us the Deluge
22:00 News in English
22:30 Nohi House

PRAYER TIMES

04:32 Fajr
(5:39) (Sunrise) Dhuha
11:46 Dhuha
15:07 Asr
17:43 Magrib
19:08 Isha
20:00 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swiflikh, Tel. 610740
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flight

Queen tours child centre in Hanover

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Monday visited the Pergamon Museum in eastern Berlin, where the Mshatta facade is exhibited among other Islamic artifacts from various parts of the Middle East.

The Queen was received by the president of the Foundation of Prussian Cultural Heritage and was guided through the tour by the director of the Museum for Islamic Art.

Accompanying the Queen on her tour were Jordanian and German officials.

Later in the day Her Majesty visited the Jordanian pavilion at the International Tourism Exchange, as well as other Arab pavilions.

In the evening the Queen attended a Jordanian reception hosted by minister of Tourism Yana Hikmat and by Royal

Accompanying the Queen on her tour were Jordanian and German officials.

In the evening the Queen attended the 30th anniversary reception of the German-Jordanian Society. She commended the society for its ongoing efforts to promote German-Jordanian understanding and cooperation and wished the members success in their future endeavours.



Munir Bashir

Munir Bashir performs tonight at the RCC

By Jean-Claude Elias

Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — Ammanites, and more particularly music lovers, are being treated to an exceptional week, featuring three high quality concerts, with an obvious programme peak. Wedesday, Feb. 10, when Iraqi oud master Munir Bashir will perform at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC) at 8:30 p.m.

The series started Monday with Al Kindi group and will end Saturday with Agnes Bashir in a piano recital. The concerts are presented by the National Music Conservatory of Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF).

Munir Bashir is much more than just an extremely talented performer and virtuoso. He is even more than a great musician, he is a great man.

Philosophers would rightfully argue that one has to be a great man in order to be a great musician.

Mr. Bashir recently received, along with former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clarke, the prestigious "Cultural Communication between North and South" award, established by the Moroccan scholar, Mehdi Al Manjari, and based on the study of more than 71 international organisations.

As a player of the oud, Mr. Bashir has taken his technique to incredible limits, working on details that very few performers care about nowadays.

His interpretations reveal a superior form of sensitivity and expression. Mr. Bashir's music has implications that reach beyond even music itself.

His recordings and performances have been found to have healing properties and some specialists in California are seriously using them in musicotherapy.

Mr. Bashir's playing is based on this unique improvisational structure. He never plays exactly the same thing twice. Instead of rigid music scores, he creates an atmosphere, which he builds gradually and smoothly.

Mr. Bashir has the widest and most open concept of music, taken in its universal understanding. He has played with well-known Western ensembles, improvising on Bach's music for instance.

His latest recording "The Roots of Flamenco" is a huge

success. In it, the master manages to recreate the famous Spanish mood, while maintaining a true respect for the oriental forms. The result is pure and beautiful music.

His next project might be a work on the roots of reggae.

He has also performed with the famous German jazz musician Mängelsofz, confirming that improvisation is common to both his music and jazz.

In his hotel room in Amman, Mr. Bashir explained to the Jordan Times how important it is for musicians to be truly and honestly dedicated to their art and not to be lured by its commercial and easy aspect. He went as far as to say that "a musician, even a cultured one, unless he is organically attached to his art, is dangerous to the society he lives in."

Mr. Bashir believes that the Arab society doesn't have enough respect for musicians, a state of affairs which has led to the decline of authentic Arabic music.

Master Bashir holds numerous positions such as Artistic Advisor to the Iraqi Ministry of Culture and Information, secretary general of the Arab Music Academy, Arab League and vice chairman of the International Music Council, UNESCO to name only a few.

He has also received prestigious awards among them the Order of Independence from His Majesty King Hussein.

Mr. Bashir's technical superiority, his philosophic approach to any musical subject, his open-minded to any style from any country, and his international fame and influence whether in the East or in the West, put him in a unique and privileged position that no other musician has ever enjoyed or had the responsibility to bear.

At Wednesday's concert, the master will be accompanied on some pieces, by the qanoun — Arabic cithar — virtuoso, Julian Jalal Eddin Weiss.

The girl was identified in a Jordanian document as Sausan Nayef Salim Al Madi, 20, born in Kuwait to Nayef Salim Al Madi, 48, a native of Nablus in the occupied West Bank, the sources said.

Conflicting accounts of the girl's activities and her approach to sympathetic Jordanians emerged Tuesday.

The girl checked into Amman Plaza Hotel 12 days ago, and was taken for questioning last Thursday shortly after she was reported to have claimed to be a member of the Kuwaiti royal family and recounting bizarre stories to those who came across her.

One of her stories, as told to the owner of a shop in the arcade of the hotel, was that she was living in fear of "Kuwaiti agents" who, she asserted, were after her for having married a Jordanian without her parents' consent, according to the sources, who

Activists consider how to get women into Parliament

By Sausan Ghosheh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — As the date for parliamentary elections nears, advocates of women's issues are pondering ways and means that would advance women's chances of getting into Jordan's 12th Parliament.

One idea that has been floated recently is granting women a quota share of seats in the Lower House. While proponents of the quota system describe it as a positive action, its opponents say that it would be undemocratic.

The quota system grants a number of positions for certain groups of people who otherwise will be discriminated against. It is incorporated in Jordan's Election Law, in order to ensure that minority groups such as Christians and Circassians are represented in Parliament.

According to the law, there are six seats for Christians, two for Circassians and one for Chechens.

Although women, theoretically, can take all the seats in Parliament, the current Parliament does not include a single woman.

Advocates of the quota system ask if it is used to ensure that minorities participate in the decision-making process, should it also be used to accord women a share in that process?

"Although women are not a minority, they are at a political

disadvantage" says Arwa Al Amiri, president of the Centre for Women's Studies.

Many Jordanians still perceive a woman's place is in the home. Even though women are increasingly becoming more visible in the public arena, they still only occupy lower level positions with few exceptions.

Eight women ran in the 1989 parliamentary elections, but none of them won. The eight ran as independents, and their campaigns were not supported by any party, society or women's organisations.

Furthermore, these women were attacked for emphasising women's concerns and their issues were belittled.

Emily Nafa, a political bureau member to the Jordanian Communist Party (JCP), explained that her party viewed the previous elections as an opportunity to advertise itself and decided to focus on the "political issues."

According to Suhair Al Tal, researcher and writer on women issues, many of the parties who describe themselves as "progressive" decided to increase their chances of winning by nominating men rather than implementing their programme and nominating several of women.

Ms. Tal believes that the role of women in the 1989 elections was extremely weak. First, she said only a small number of women ran for elections. Second, women were not aware of their



All the members of the 80-seat Lower House of Parliament are male

rights and their voting patterns portray that the majority of them did not enjoy independent thought and voted only for "their fathers, brothers' or husbands' candidates."

This, she maintained, has resulted in the majority in Parliament being unsupportive of women's issues.

But feminists argue that there are women who are more qualified than men in Parliament. In addition, they say, the presence of women in the public arena will increase women's political, social and economical skills.

Women cannot develop while they are isolated from the public

weakening the civil status laws associated with women.

Critics of the quota system say that it is undemocratic. They believe that allocating seats in Parliament for women will deprive those men who are more qualified.

But feminists argue that there are women who are more qualified than men in Parliament. In addition, they say, the presence of women in the public arena will increase women's political, social and economical skills.

Women activists believe that by entering Parliament women can defend their rights and participate in making the decisions that affect their lives. They accuse the current Parliament of neglecting women's issues and

life, the feminists maintain. Chairman of the Islamic Action Front (IAF), Ishak Al Farhan said he opposes the quota system because he perceives men and women as equals. He added that the inaction of the quota will portray women as inferior to men.

Ms. Tal disagrees. She said equality between men and women in accordance with existing laws is only "theoretical" and in reality discrimination against women is prevalent.

Some liberal women oppose the quota system fearing it will place mainly conservative women in Parliament, who, according to them, will sign away the remaining rights of women in Jordan.

Dr. Amiri believes that "this is not a good reason" to oppose the quota, and asks, should "the Parliament, as a whole, be abolished because conservatives are going to take the majority of the seats?"

Ms. Tal predicts that conservative women will be the first women in Parliament whether the quota is enacted or not. This, she perceives as beneficial to the women's movement because the public will become accustomed to seeing women in such positions and thus will allow "in the long run, for more liberal women in these places."

Awareness Party chairman, Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh, himself a deputy, believes the quota system will only benefit a minority of the seats."

women — "those who work in the public arena." He said this representation of women will be "a fake one" since women will be ensured a place in Parliament by law, not by the choice of the people.

With no change to the present election law in the offing, the question remains whether women can reach Parliament without the quota system?

Many researchers of women's issues doubt that this is possible. They believe that one or two conservative women may be successful in achieving this goal, but they will be purely taken positions, serving to give the party that nominated them a liberal image or to attract women voters to that party.

None of the parties contacted by the Jordan Times indicated that they were planning to nominate a female member in the coming elections.

Women activists insist that government intervention is needed in order to help women reach Parliament, pointing out that it was only by a Royal Decree that women acquired political rights, or were appointed as ministers or senators.

Quota system supporters who spoke to the Jordan Times see it as a temporary process until society changes and women become incorporated in all aspects of life; until the public votes on issues without considering if the candidate is a man or a woman.

63.3% of deputies to run in November elections — survey

By Atallah Huneiti
Petra

AMMAN — A survey conducted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, last month revealed that 63.3 per cent of the members of the Lower House of Parliament

will run for the next general elections scheduled for this November, and that the rest are still undecided.

A total of 60 out of 80 deputies participated in the survey, giving their views about their nomination for elections and other topics.

Among the participants were 18 deputies from Amman, 36 from the other governorates, and six deputies representing badia constituencies.

The survey included questions on such topics as the deputies' attitude vis-a-vis the democratic process in Jordan, the peace talks with Israel, the duties of the Lower House of Parliament, political parties, the voting procedures, and attendance of Parliament sessions.

With regard to the peace process, the survey showed that only 38 per cent of the deputies supported the negotiations. On the democratisation process only five per cent said they considered it very successful and 35 per cent said it was acceptable.

Only 10 per cent of those surveyed said the Lower House was

performing its duty in an excellent manner; 46.7 per cent said the performance was good; and only 11.7 per cent believed that the political parties will determine the nature and representation in the next Parliament.

The survey also showed that 48.3 per cent of the deputies who plan to run in the November elections will raise the same slogans they raised in the 1989 elections, and 6.7 per cent have no intention of raising any slogan.

Only 23.3 per cent of the deputies covered in the survey believed that the present distribution of the parliamentary constituencies was sound and correct.

The survey also revealed that 1.7 per cent of the deputies believe that the Jordanian public has absolute trust in Parliament, and 10 per cent believed that Parliament's views had influenced the Jordanian political decision-making process.

At least 45 per cent of the surveyed deputies voiced their willingness to assume ministerial posts and 35 per cent said they demand that the three authorities — legislative, judiciary and executive — be totally separated.

A total of 3.3 per cent believed that the government information services and the media do cooperate with Parliament in an excellent manner and 30 per cent believed that such cooperation is below the acceptable level.

Ministry to take census of handicapped children

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Social Development is preparing a list of handicapped children through the help of a special questionnaire distributed in different parts of the country. Director of the Special Education Department at the Ministry of Social Development Amal Nahas said the questionnaire will also aim at providing help to these children and at a later stage give them a proper education, vocational training and employment.

Mrs. Nahas said that 5,000 handicapped children have been registered with the ministry to date.

She added that the handicapped have been receiving training for the past years, and said that handicapped children are given education and training at special classes at schools run by the Ministry of Education.

These centres of schools provide training according to set programmes designed to rehabilitate the handicapped in a manner that would help them to adapt to

their needs.

Administered by specialists, the centres also offer advice and instruction to parents of handicapped children, Mrs. Nahas said.

The special education schools run by the ministry offer male and female handicapped children a choice of 15 trades which are in demand in the local labour market, she added.

To further facilitate the life of handicapped adults, the Ministry of Social Development has been arranging for their special cars to be exempt from customs duty. According to Mrs. Nahas, 503 such vehicles have been exempted to date.

Currently, the Ministry of Social Development is implementing an early diagnosis programme to detect any disability among children. The programme is being implemented under the supervision of the Ministry of Education in different government schools. Mrs. Nahas has said.

Exiles

(Continued from page 1)

more Israel will lose and its real face would be disclosed to the world," Dr. Rantisi said. "The longer we stay here in these hills, the more our cause is served."

A senior Palestine Liberation Organisation official, Farouk Kaddoumi, was in Damascus Tuesday to push for a coordination meeting of the Arab parties.

Syria Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa said last month Syria would convene an Arab conference in Damascus to try to relaunch the Arab-Israeli negotiations.

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HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Crown Prince condoles Sawalha family

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday delegated Deputy Director of his office Abdullah Kanaan to convey his condolences to the Sawalha family on the death of Hanna Khalil Sawalha.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

Exhibition of handicrafts by Jordanian artist Dana Ahmad Khreis at the Royal Cultural Centre.
Exhibition entitled "The Present Islamic World in Photos and News" at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST).

Jordan Times

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People are the final arbiter

THE LATEST peace agreement between Afghanistan's rebels and government declaring a truce before beginning the process of healing between them is a test not only for the sincerity of the warring factions to end their internecine fighting but also for the clout of several Muslim nations that pulled off the accord.

In addition to Pakistan, the architect of the original peace plan that culminated in power-sharing among the various groups, both Saudi Arabia and Iran are now exercising influence not only on the principal rebel groups but also on the other splinter ones. Under the negotiated agreement arrived at in Islamabad Sunday, Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani and his archrival Gulbuddin Hekmatyar will share power and appoint a mutually acceptable cabinet in a manner that reflects the extent of the pulls and pushes of Riyadh, Tehran and Islamabad in the post-Communist era Afghanistan.

What complicates the already complex formula for peace in the country is the existence of no less than 10 groups vying for power and influence in the running of the country prior to the adoption of the projected new constitution for the country.

This dimension of the conflict has yet to be put to the ultimate test. The other greater challenge comes from the people themselves. For despite the fact that the various Afghani leaders, who accepted and signed the ceasefire accord, have been summoned by Riyadh to swear allegiance to the peace plan at Islam's holiest shrine in Mecca, there is every reason to suspect that the agreement could unravel in the upcoming months unless the people of Afghanistan themselves are made the final arbiters of the military and political solution struck among their leaders.

Gone are the days when externally brokered peace agreements can be expected to hold when they are not put to a true democratic test at the level of the people. More than half a dozen ceasefire accords had been signed in the past in Afghanistan but failed because they were not arrived at with due consideration given to the wishes of the Afghani people themselves. If the latest peace efforts are to succeed permanently, there is going to be an urgent need to accelerate the process that would involve the people in its implementation. Translated into actual deeds, the people of Afghanistan must be afforded an early opportunity to elect a democratically chosen parliament on the basis of pluralism and national reconciliation.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

EVER SINCE the collapse of world Communism and the former Soviet bloc, the Western media, particularly that in the United States, have been waging a hostile campaign against Islam, trying to depict the faith as the enemy of nations and the source of regional and international terrorism, said Sawi Al Shaab Arabic daily Tuesday. The paper said that the hostile media have been exploiting certain acts of violence committed by extremist factions whose actions are not in harmony with the Islamic faith and religious principles. It said that the U.S.-led campaign has been aimed at painting a very ugly picture of Islam to security and stability. The New York blast peace opened the appetite of this hostile media to launch attacks on the Muslims even though no conclusive evidence has been found that could pin this terrible action on Muslims, the paper pointed out. It said that Islam condemns terrorism and fights against it, but extremist groups could be exploiting Islam to carry out such atrocities. The paper expressed the view that the New York blast carries the hall mark of world Zionism, which has been spearheading the anti-Islam campaign around the world and running a hostile media against the Arab and Islam countries in general. Indeed, added the paper, this blast is now triggering a new Zionist-Western campaign designed to smear the name of Islam and the Arab and Muslim people around the world.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour said that the results of the trade union elections in Jordan can by no means reflect the actual political situation nor should they be considered as indicators of the outcome of the coming parliamentary elections. The rejoice of blocs whose members win such elections can only be described like the joy that overwhelms sports clubs when they win a championship but no more, said Mohammad Ibrahim Daoud. The writer said that most, if not all, the elections held by the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, professional unions and others had been influenced by traditional social and tribal considerations. Jordanians are not yet politically mature to discern the influence of relatives and tribes when casting ballots; and the democratic process is not deeply rooted in the minds of the majority of the electorate, claimed the writer. He said the coming general elections, like the trade unions elections, are bound to remain under the traditional influences. The long absence of political parties from the Jordanian political scene has had its deep effect on society, which lacks clear vision about political life and subsequently one can only conclude that such situation does not create an opportune climate for a real and drastic change in social thinking, the writer added.

Economic Forum

By Dr. Abdalla Malki

Economics of monopoly and tuition fees

THE SHOCKINGLY steep increase in tuition fees announced, or intended to be announced, by the New English School offers an interesting opportunity to evaluate the behaviour of the private sector in a deregulated market where the government does not fix prices. The evaluation will hold true even if the planned increase will be cancelled or adjusted.

The purported fees increase is around 30-60 per cent. Nothing justifies such a price hike, certainly not in a single year and particularly in Jordan. The prices of inputs that go into the educational process could not have risen by anything like that. The whole thing will take on a bizarre appearance if we remember that the price level in Jordan has just subsided to 4 per cent. Good-intentioned persons will be easily tempted to invoke the traditions of free marketism to justify the exceptional fees rise. That would be a mistake: What we face here is an act that violates the spirit of free markets. It is a monopolistic situation.

In a market economy, the buyer or consumer who does not like the price or cannot afford it can switch to another producer who offers the goods or service under question at lower prices. As demand thus diminishes for his products, the first producer will cut the price to boost demand. This very basic part of the market mechanism is stalled in the present case of the New English School.

Students in, say, the fourth or seventh class who, or whose parents, do not like, or cannot afford, the new fee levels cannot quit the school. They simply have become accustomed to certain

norms in this school and they will not be easily incorporated, if they ever are, in other schools with different systems. In other words, they do not enjoy the freedom of choice which propels the market mechanism. This is monopoly.

The market economy tolerates all sorts of economic freedom but not monopolistic practices such as the one under discussion. If it acts to counteract this situation, the government will not be breaching free market teachings but will, on the contrary, be abiding by them. Monopoly itself is the worst form of economic suppression.

The government, under a market economy, is not a neutral force. The non-interventionist role it assumes is one bordered on each side by its duty to prevent anarchy, foul play, exploitation and monopoly. Such a role is only equally matched by its supervisory and disciplinary duties.

The sad event of dropping tuition fees by a wild 30-60 per cent in one gulp is additionally a reminder of the preparedness of certain private business to go very far after profits.

The fact that this is being done by an educational firm makes things much more troublesome. Education is not a luxury, certainly not up to the secondary level. It will be even sadder if the government opts not to intervene in this and similar conditions where there exists an abused conception of economic freedom, and irresponsible of monopoly.

A sudden 30-60 per cent price rise is not justified by any economic criteria.



An effective peace enforcement mechanism

A U.N. command for military forces

By Frederick Bonnart

BRUSSELS — The need has now been recognised for an international military force to monitor and enforce any agreement that may be made between the warring parties in former Yugoslavia.

Readiness to participate in such a force has been declared by the United States and most of its North Atlantic Treaty partners, as well as by Russia and several of the former neutral nations.

So an adequate number of forces from different countries is available. The missing requirement is a common command structure.

All potential participants now appear to have accepted this. The Russian government agreed on Feb. 24 to the establishment of multilateral U.N. forces, and stated its readiness to involve the mechanism of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC). The council was set up in December 1991 to establish links between NATO and the former Warsaw Pact countries.

The international force would thus be responsible for maintaining order in a devastated land where the fierce antagonisms will not have been laid to rest. Common rules of engagement and behaviour for all military forces present would have to be established and applied without fail.

Forces would have to be ready to be engaged, complete with combat and logistic support, to deal with any flare-up.

All this requires a unitary chain

of command reaching from a political authority, assisted by a military staff, down to a single field commander to whom all forces are subordinated.

Such a command system exists in NATO, and arrangements could be made to integrate non-NATO forces. Russia, in particular, would be an essential partner, both from a political and a military point of view. But it is clearly impossible politically to place all cooperating forces under the organisation's command.

NATO has repeatedly stated readiness to provide whatever support the United Nations requires. Senior alliance planners arrived in New York last week to discuss such plans.

The Security Council would have to establish an operational committee in permanent session to provide the overall political control. The military advice and technical supervision would be supplied by a revitalised Military Staff Committee.

If this body had the support of NATO's command structure, the required procedures, expertise and facilities would be immediately available. Technical staff, intelligence and communications equipment and personnel, as well as contingency plans, could be provided quickly. Qualified senior officers from non-NATO countries could easily be accommodated.

An overall force commander could then be appointed for the operation in the Balkans. Although NATO forces would be in the majority, he should preferably be from another nationality — perhaps the Swedish general, Lars Erik Wahlgren, who was recently appointed to command U.N. forces in former Yugoslavia, with a NATO deputy. The Security Council has a Military

Committee on which the chiefs of defence staff of the permanent member countries are represented, but which has never functioned. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali has called for its activation.

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Committee on which the chiefs of defence staff of the permanent member countries are represented, but which has never functioned. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali has called for its activation.

The writer is editor of NATO's Sixteen Nations, an independent military journal. The article is reprinted from The International Herald Tribune.

Maastricht Treaty

A tough test in German court

By Richard Murphy

Reuter

BONN — Could the Maastricht Treaty ultimately come to grief in Germany, the self-styled motor of European integration?

Diehard German opponents of the treaty hope so.

They are fighting a rearguard action in the constitutional court in Karlsruhe, Germany's biggest court, to have the treaty blocked on the grounds that it would undermine democracy and national sovereignty.

Their action raises the intriguing possibility that Germany, rather than Maastricht laggards Britain and Denmark, could be one of the very last European Community (EC) members to complete ratification — or even that it might not do so at all.

Both houses of parliament ratified the blueprint for political and economic union amid much fanfare in December, but President Richard Von Weizsaecker, acting

on government advice, has still not signed the formal "instrument of ratification."

He is waiting for the constitutional court to rule on complaints by several dozen individuals and the far-right Republican party challenging the treaty as unconstitutional.

The treaty cannot come into force until all 12 EC states have deposited their instruments of ratification with the Italian government, where they will be held in the archives alongside the EC's Rome Treaty.

"Under national law, ratification has been completed and is being implemented," says Mr. Weizsaecker's spokesman Hans-Henning Horstmann. "Under international law, this will happen when the constitutional court has given its ruling."

Ironically, the leading German opponent of the treaty is a former top "Eurocrat", Manfred Brunner.

He was cabinet chief in the office of EC Commission Vice-President Martin Bangemann until the two parted company last year because of "fundamental differences" over the treaty.

Mr. Brunner says the treaty infringes on human rights and violates fundamental principles of the German constitution.

His lawyer, Karl Albrecht Schacht Schneider, will try to persuade the court that German democracy is threatened by the transfer of authority to a community dominated by heads of government who can ride roughshod over a weak European Parliament.

"We are very confident that it will go ahead," says foreign Foreign Ministry spokesman Juergen Pfeifer.

Guenther Verheugen, chairman of parliament's European affairs committee, is also unconcerned. "I see no problem at all," he says.

He noted that Bonn's 1949 constitution contains an explicit commitment to European union and said the constitutional amendments took account of previous rulings on European integration from Karlsruhe.

"The Germans decided to establish a German state, the Federal Republic of Germany. If they want a different state, a United Europe, they must decide

again by means of a new constitution," he said.

The government, proud of its boast that Germany ratified the treaty before the original deadline of Dec. 31, 1992, plays down the significance of the court cases and dismisses speculation that German ratification could be jeopardised.

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World Trade Centre blast

A hint of what's to come?

By Richard Pyle

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The investigative skills and luck that cracked the World Trade Centre bombing case have not dispelled the greater fear of U.S. law enforcement: That Americans may be facing a wave of organised terrorism on their own home ground.

Although Americans and their institutions have been victimised in scores of bombings, skyjackings, assassinations and other politically motivated acts of violence over the past 25 years, few have occurred in the United States.

Officials credit this to several factors: The distance from the centres of revolutionary ferment, the easy availability of U.S.-related targets abroad, Washington's tough anti-terrorist policy of no negotiations and swift armed retaliation, and the efficiency of its law enforcement in solving such crimes.

But with the end of the Cold War unleashing a new surge of nationalist and religious zealotry around the globe, officials say there is no reason to assume the brazen attack on a symbolic heart of capitalist democracy was simply an isolated event.

A day after the Trade Centre Blast, New York Gov. Mario Cuomo said it was "just a hint of what they have grown accustomed to in some other great nations, like Britain." He added, hopefully: "I don't expect that we'll ever see things like that bere. We are stronger than that, and we have better law enforcement."

In an ABC-TV interview Sunday, former CIA Director Robert Gates called Iran responsible for most Middle East terrorism at present, but said it was "too early to say" whether such activity was coming to Puerto Rico.

Even so, more serious activity is not unknown in the United States. The 20th century has witnessed scores of bombings against politicians, diplomats, judges, government agencies and private companies.

Bombs exploded in or near the U.S. Senate in 1915, 1975 and 1983; in the Wall Street area in the 1920s and 1975, and at New York's Luardia airport in 1975.

Others, closer to the smell of death in the trade centre's shattered underground garage, are less optimistic.

Letters

Royal Jordanian's dilemma

To the Editor:

IT IS with utter amazement that I read an article in your Arabic sister daily Al Ra'i about Royal Jordanian's dilemma when "compelled" to employ expatriate air hostesses. Their long-established presence has always been a welcome complement to the local workforce. However, the recent uproar is the result of the salary proposed to the latest recruits, mainly Irish.

The answers of RJ Vice President Mumb Toukan to the questions asked in the media is nothing less than an insult to the intelligence of those of us who are better informed. Allow me to point out the following: all of course in the spirit of the prevailing atmosphere of democracy and free speech.

RJ's contention that expatriate air hostesses are essential to facilitate communication with passengers aboard its international flights to the USA and the Far East would be valid were in not for the fact that mastery of the English language is a prerequisite for the employment of Jordanian

U.S. to issue invitations to talks

(Continued from page 1)

policy of banning contacts with the (PLO) despite Britain's decision to resume high-level talks with the group.

"No, we're going to continue our same policy with respect to that," he said when asked if a change was contemplated.

"The effort that was made to have meetings with Mr. Arafat, I think, resulted in our disappointment at their failure to assist us on terrorism matters," he told reporters during a picture-taking session with Italian Foreign Minister Emilio Colombo.

"So, we're going to continue, at least for the time being, with

our present policy," Mr. Christopher added.

The U.S. position is a bit more muddled than Mr. Christopher's statements would make it seem, however.

Although direct contacts with the PLO are forbidden, U.S. officials, including former Secretary of State James Baker, have had frequent meetings with the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks even though it is an open secret that the delegation is advised by the PLO.

Israel has accepted the Palestinian delegates as participants in the peace talks.

U.S. officials believe a change now in policy towards the PLO could upset the peace talks.

FBI says 'large group' behind blast

(Continued from page 1)

America is vulnerable to domestic terrorism — the World Trade Centre bombing clearly shows that we are — but rather, what are we prepared to do about it?" Mr. Schumer said.

Mr. Sessions also gave assurances that the bombing would not be used to justify interfering in the lives of people merely because of their nationality or religious beliefs.

A Jordanian citizen of Palestinian origin, Mohammad Salameh, and Egyptian-born Ibrahim Al Gabrwy have been arrested in the case involving the Feb. 26 bombing.

Much of the discussion at the hearing revolved around a Muslim cleric, Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, who preaches in mosques in the New York area.

Sheikh Omar stood trial and was acquitted a decade ago in connection with the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat but was allowed into the United States by mistake, according to the State Department's coordinator for counterterrorism, Thomas McNamara.

Mr. McNamara said that although the sheikh had been on a "watch list" he was given an entry visa by the U.S. embassy in Khartoum in 1990. The visa was revoked later that year but he later received a resident alien green card.

When that status was revoked, he applied for political asylum from Egypt and the case re-

mained before the U.S. courts.

The Washington Post reported that Mr. Salameh, who was arrested March 4 and charged with "aiding and abetting the bombing," is considered a relatively marginal figure in the attack, and law enforcement officials acknowledge that evidence against him is largely circumstantial.

Mr. Gabrwy, is being held on a charge that he obstructed justice when federal agents came to search his home after finding Mr. Salameh had listed his address on a driver's licence application. It is not clear what evidence, if any there is that he is involved in the bombing and he has not been charged in the larger case.

The FBI said Monday that more search warrants and arrest warrants could be issued this week.

Workers beneath the trade centre, meanwhile, continued to inch into the wobbly blast crater, which is expected to hold a wealth of information, said Mr. Fox of the FBI.

"When they finally get in there, they're going to look like a colony of ants going after sugar," he said.

In other developments, Mr. Salameh got into a scuffle Monday in the federal jail in Manhattan. Mr. Salameh fought with guards after they gave him underwear that was too large and socks that were too small, said his lawyer, Robert Precht.

Mr. Precht said Mr. Salameh was not seriously hurt.

Egyptian militants go on trial in court

(Continued from page 1)

Before the trial started in a theatre at the Haekstap army barracks, on a desert highway 40 kilometres northeast of Cairo, the defendants boasted of their accomplishments with the statement.

The men, most bearded, some in white galabiyas, others in Western-style suits, interrupted their chanting long enough for Abdul Zaher, an engineer, to read it.

"What is the Al Gamma'a Al Islamiya (Islamic Group)?" he asked. "It is led by Dr. Omar Abdul Rahman. It killed Sadat after he rejected the rule of God."

Defence lawyers tried to get him to stop, but he ignored them. "If terrorism and extremism means legitimate self-defence and the defence of our religion and honour, then welcome terrorism."

Egyptian courts have acquitted Sheikh Abdul Rahman, who has lived in the United States for more than three years, three times of charges related to extremist acts, including ordering Mr. Sadat's death.

After the statement was read

and during a court adjournment for noon prayers, defendant Mustafa Sayed, a lawyer, reiterated: "There is only one Al Gamma'a Al Islamiya, and Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman is our emir (leader)."

The first trial session, which lasted almost two hours, was mainly procedural. The military judge adjourned the trial to March 13.

In their statement, the defendants said that they were attacking tourism in Egypt to destabilise the economy and the government. They said the violence was also spurred by the government's "horrible" torture of detainees and its long-term detention of suspects without due process. They claimed the government had held up to 4,000 suspects without trial over the past four years.

Since the beginning of 1992, the militants have waged an escalated violence campaign to overthrow President Hosni Mubarak's secular government and replace it with an Iran-like theocracy. To date, a total of 95 people have been killed and 166 wounded in the violence.

(Continued from page 1)

Palestinian parties which are based in Damascus.

The PLO sees Syria boasting of some friendly and unfriendly opponents of Fatah group as "a double-edged sword."

"We have no trouble with the concept of some Palestinian groups being based in Damascus but the inter-Palestinian dialogue must remain amicable and that has not always been the case," said the Amman-based PLO official.

By appealing to Syria, Hamas hit a raw nerve of the PLO.

The PLO feels it is "duty" to continue its contacts and dialogue with Hamas, because "the PLO is the representative of all Palestinians and Hamas is Palestinian," said the official. "It is not going to make any concessions to Hamas over issues of representation in the Palestine National Council."

"There will be no compromise."

Efforts revive talks stalled — Abdul Shafiq

(Continued from page 1)

sage, but in reply to a question on whether new ideas were discussed to resolve the expellee crisis, Mr. Musa sounded upbeat.

"We hope to be able to settle this matter in a satisfactory way that would conform to international law and help the peace process," the minister said. "This is the focus of current contacts."

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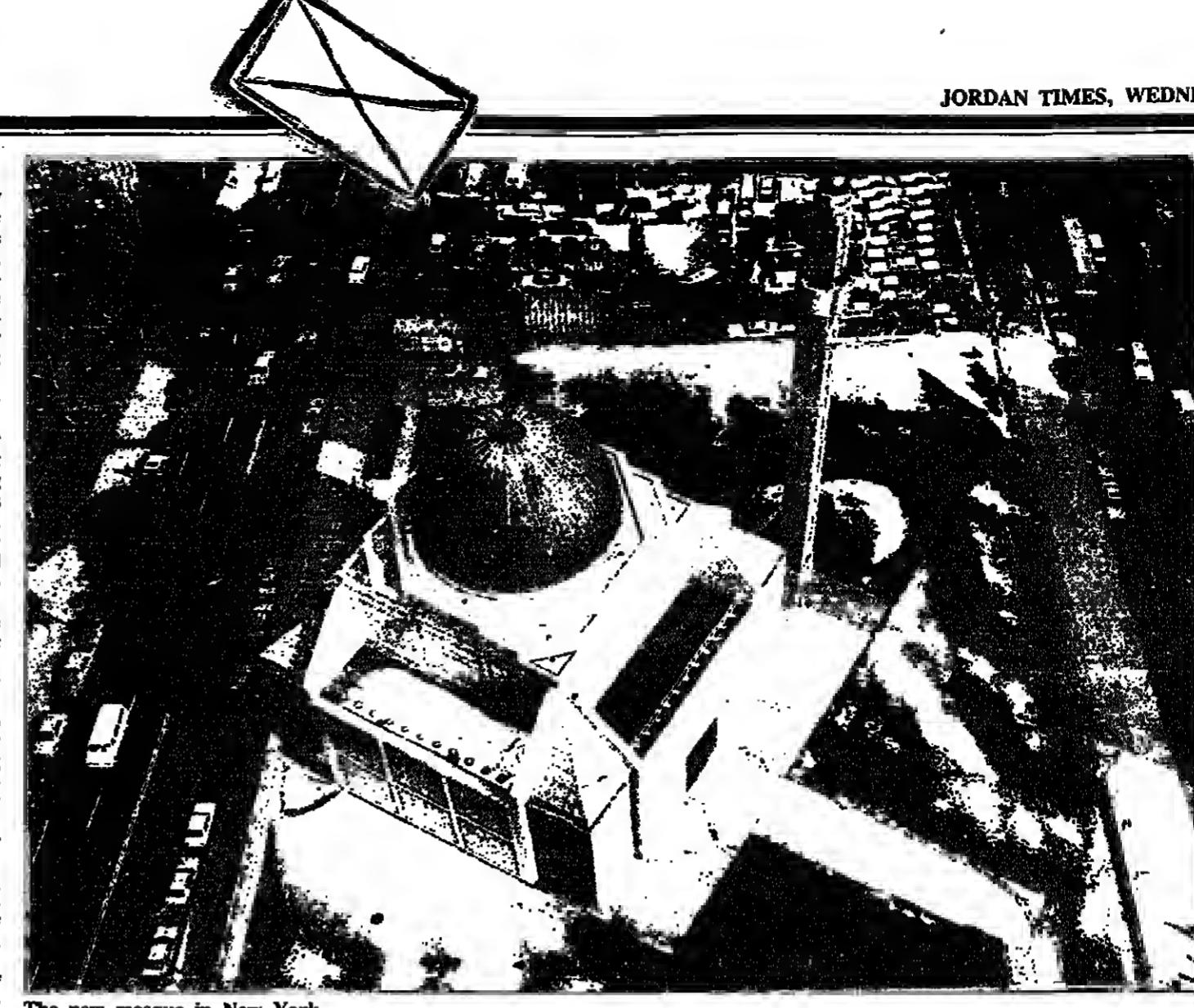
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The new mosque in New York

New mosque is symbol of Islam in America

Completed over a year ago, the mosque is part of the Islamic Cultural Centre located on Third Avenue and 96th Street on New York's upper east side.

Although there are over two dozen places where Muslims say prayers, this is the first building constructed as a mosque. A common place for Muslims to offer prayers has been a penthouse room at the U.N.'s Dag Hammarskjold library building.

Sheikh Osman, who was previously a director of the Islamic Centre located on the west side of New York, added, "Islam is misunderstood in this part of the world." He says the presence of the Islamic Cultural Centre creates a better understanding.

People are surprised and happy at the answers they receive," he explained. "They realise Islam is a very rational and progressive religion."

A recent estimate based on U.S. census figures projects that 3.5 million Muslims live in the U.S. about 40,000 Muslims reside in the New York area. The number is expected to increase as more immigrants from Islamic countries come to the U.S.

"The mosque fulfills a very important function," Mr. Osman said. "In this part of the world there are so many temptation, especially for young people. People have to learn the right values in dealing with such influences."

"Dr. Mohammad Salem Agwar, a former professor of

library will be expanded soon so that books can be checked out.

The month of Ramadan, which started Feb. 22, is a particularly busy time for the Islamic Centre.

Dr. Agwar says that every day during Ramadan there will be a lecture and recitation from the Qur'an. The end of Ramadan will be marked by the celebration of Eid-Al-Fitr, which is expected to take place on March 22. Over 2,000 people offer Friday prayers every week, and a larger number is expected to celebrate the end of fasting, said Dr. Agwar.

The head of the board of trustees of the Islamic Cultural Centre, Mohammad Abdulla

Abdullah, is Kuwait's ambassador to the U.N. he says with satisfaction that the construction of the mosque was a "historic" event after years of delay.

Originally put on the drawing board years ago by ambassadors of Islamic countries to the U.N., the project did not enter the construction phase until 1987. The mosque was a year late in opening because Kuwait funding — the \$17 million pledged for the project — came to an abrupt halt after the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Although the copper dome and gold-tipped minaret mark the unmis-

representative.

In a separate statement to the Jordan Times, Mr. Nazzal said that his organisation had met with Spanish and Chinese diplomats in Khartoum at the end of February. He did not say why this information was withheld from the media for over a week. He said his organisation wished to clarify that all diplomatic contacts being made by organisation was in order to secure the safe return of the expellees in South Lebanon.

Munir Said, a senior Hamas official in Khartoum, met with Augustus Cassinello, a political bureau official from the Spanish embassy in Cairo as well as with the Chinese ambassador to Khartoum. "It was a meeting upon their request," said Mr. Nazzal.

Hamas officials in Amman bad

meetings in February with the Jordan-based ambassadors of Britain, Germany and Italy as well as a senior U.S. diplomat.

They considered Hamas as their

name of the detainee.

Mr. Said police would compare the settler's gun to the bullet taken from Maidan's chest. Israel offered to repatriate 101 exiles immediately and the rest by the end of the year. The exiles refused, insisting on full implementation of a U.N. Security Council resolution that demanded immediate repatriation of all.

With U.S. backing, Israel offered to repatriate 101 exiles immediately and the rest by the end of the year. The exiles refused, insisting on full implementation of a U.N. Security Council resolution that demanded immediate repatriation of all.

Mr. Said said the man was being held on suspicion of involvement in Maidan's death, but that he had not been charged. Mr. Said would not release the

process.

"This meeting offered Mr. Hogg a chance to meet Faisal Husseini and the PLO ... our views on why it is so important to get back to the negotiating table," a spokesman said. "The PLO will have an influence on this important decision."

Britain holds top-level PLO talk

(Continued from page 1)

He said the PLO did not get all it wanted in talks in the United States.

"I believe that they now (think) they can raise some of them (their demands) with the Europeans, especially the British," said Mr. Bellin. "What I am afraid of is that as a result of it they will decide not to come to the negotiating table in April."

Mr. Hogg did not specify "concessions" sought from Israel. He said that in previous talks about expulsions "we have pushed the Israelis, sought to persuade them to budge on that which they're already done."

Britain has condemned as a violation of international law the Israeli expulsion.

Asked about the Israeli protest at resumed ministerial-level contacts with the PLO, the Foreign Office said the decision to hold the meeting was taken because the British government believed it would move forward the peace process.

"This meeting offered Mr. Hogg a chance to meet Faisal Husseini and the PLO ... our views on why it is so important to get back to the negotiating table," a spokesman said. "The PLO will have an influence on this important decision."

The spokesman said the meeting came at a delicate stage in peace process and Mr. Hogg would make a similar point to Israel when he met Mr. Bellin Thursday.

Mr. Arafat welcomed the European decision, saying it would strengthen Europe's role in peace process.

"We express our considerable interest in the British government's resumption of contacts with the PLO at ministerial level," Mr. Arafat said.

He also welcomed Belgian decision last week to upgrade PLO mission in Brussels from information and liaison office give it the title of General Palestinian Delegation.

The decision followed a meeting in Tunis last month between Mr. Arafat and Belgian Foreign Minister Willy Claes.

"These steps will certainly reinforce the European role in peace efforts in our area," Mr. Arafat said.

Mr. Arafat made his remarks in a message to Palestinians in occupied territories marking 6th month of the intifada against Israeli rule. The message was issued by the Palestinian news agency WAFA.

Mr. Arafat also talks to French Ambassador Jean-Nicolas Bouliane de Lacoste in Tunis Monday.

For the European role in peace efforts in our area," Mr. Arafat said.

Mr. Arafat made his remarks in a message to Palestinians in occupied territories marking 6th month of the intifada against Israeli rule. The message was issued by the Palestinian news agency WAFA.

Mr. Arafat also talks to French Ambassador Jean-Nicolas Bouliane de Lacoste in Tunis Monday.

SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

Warhurst saves Sheffield Wednesday

LONDON (R) — Reluctant striker Paul Warhurst kept Premier League Sheffield Wednesday's F.A. Cup hopes alive with a late goal to earn them a 3-2 draw in their quarter-final away to Derby Monday. It was the central defender's second goal of the tie and his 11th in the last 10 matches. First Division Derby ran Wednesday ragged in the second half and seemed to have sewn up a semifinal spot when they struck twice inside four minutes. But the remarkable Warhurst had the last word, sweeping in substitute Nigel Jenson's right wing cross with only five minutes left. The winner of the March 17 replay at Hillsborough will meet either Sheffield United or Blackburn, who replay their quarter-final the previous day.

Blair wins top amateur athlete award

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Bonnie Blair, who captured two gold medals in speed skating at the Albertville Olympics, Monday night won the Sullivan Award as the nation's top amateur athlete last year. The 28-year-old from Champaign, Illinois finally prevailed in her fourth time as a finalist. Blair is only the third winter Olympic athlete to win in the award's 60 year history. The others were figure skater Dick Button (1949) and speedskater Eric Heiden (1980).

Bergkamp voted Dutch Footballer of the Year

AMSTERDAM (R) — Ajax Amsterdam's Italy-bound striker Dennis Bergkamp has been chosen Dutch 1992 Footballer of the Year. It is the second time Dutch league players have voted for the international marksman, who is to play for Internazionale Milan starting next season. Bergkamp also won the 1991 Dutch award. His Ajax team mate Wim Jonk, a defensive midfielder, is also moving to Internazionale next season, was runner up. 'SV' Eindhoven's Brazilian striker Romario finished third.

Bonaly, Chen Lu head women's qualifications

RAGUE (AP) — Three time European champion Surya Bonaly of France took advantage of another mediocre performance by American Nancy Kerrigan to lead the first group of women's qualifications Monday at the World Figure Skating Championships. In second group, China's Chen Lu won over Ukraine's Oksana Baiul with a sparkling programme that included six triple jumps. Bonaly also landed six triple jumps and had high technical scores to win the first group while Kerrigan again failed to impress.

Lawsuit filed on behalf of female boxer

SEATTLE (AP) — A 16-year-old girl who hopes to become an Olympic boxer is at the center of a sex discrimination lawsuit filed Monday by the American Civil Liberties Union. The lawsuit, filed in King County Superior Court on behalf of Jennifer McCleery, claims McCleery is being prevented from boxing in violation of state anti discrimination laws. Kathleen Taylor, executive director of the ACLU of Washington, said the girl wasn't seeking the right to box against men, only other women.

Kasparov and Karpov take joint lead

LINEARES, Spain (R) — World champion Garry Kasparov and his old rival Anatoly Karpov shared the lead at the Linares Grandmaster chess tournament after the ninth round Monday. Kasparov defeated Viswanathan Anand of India in 65 moves. Anand had been leading the tournament with six points from eight games. Kasparov, playing white, overtook Anand after winning two pawns with some clever tactical play. Karpov, playing black, outplayed Yugoslav Ljubomir Ljubojevic to win a smooth victory in 40 moves.

World Youth Soccer Championship

England beat U.S.; Saudis draw again

LEBOURNE (Agencies) — In a Group D match in Adelaide, Norway and Saudi Arabia drew 0-0. The Saudis had earlier secured another draw against the United States Tuesday and kept them on track for a place in the eight of the World Youth Soccer Championships.

England, who drew their first up C match against South Korea, could have won by a goal but for some keeping by Jeff Cassar. However even Cassar, who four spectacular saves, did not stop the young Saudi Wednesday star who fisted on to a throw-in and struck ball into the top left-hand corner of the net.

The American outsiders, who European champions Turkey in an astonishing opening match, found the well-drilled English professionals a far tougher spot.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAH HIRSCH
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WHERE'S THE ENTRY?

North-South vulnerable. East calls.

NORTH
♦ K J 7 3
♦ K 8 5
Void
♦ K 10 8 6 5 2
EST EAST
Q 10 8 4 2 6
A 9 6
7 6 5 K J 10 2 9 8 3
A 9 ♠ Q 7 4

SOUTH
♦ K 9 5
♦ Q 7 4 3
♦ A 4 2
♦ J 3

he bidding:

West South West North
1 Pass Pass 1st
1 ass 3 NT Pass Pass

Opening lead: Seven of ♦

Here's a chance for you to test your analytical powers. Would you rather play or defend three no trump after a diamond lead?

South might have been wiser to play North's double of three diamonds. However, the honors and not cards are particularly well suited for East-West, so it is unlikely that East will be set more than one trick—a paltry penalty when

there's a vulnerable game in the offing.

When this hand was played, East covered the opening lead with the eight and declarer ducked, winning a low diamond continuation with the queen. The jack of clubs was run to East's queen, and declarer's last diamond stopper was forced out. However, East had no entry to the good diamonds, so declarer came to nine tricks after forcing out the aces of clubs and hearts.

All seems pretty normal, but does the result answer our question?

Although it might look reasonable on the surface, that's not really the case. West made a critical blunder that gave declarer the contract.

Suppose West were to shoot up with the ace of clubs on the first lead and return the remaining diamond, allowing East to force out the ace of diamonds. Since declarer has no way to come to nine tricks without setting up clubs, and that suit cannot be established without allowing East to gain the lead with the queen, the contract goes the way of the dodo bird.

Declarer has no way to counter this defense. Move to the head of the class if you spotted it.

Formula One

Comings and goings mark season debut

PARIS (AP) — Nigel Mansell is gone. Michael Andretti has arrived.

Ayrton Senna is back. And Alain Prost has returned, for the time being at least.

The Formula One racing season opens this week amid frantic comings and goings by the world's leading drivers. The maneuvering may not be over yet.

The opening race is the South African Grand Prix at Kyalami Sunday. It looked for a while as if the Williams team would be missing, after dominating Formula One last year with Mansell at the helm.

Frank Williams sent his application for the 1993 season a day late to the International Auto Sports Federation, known as FISA. A few teams tried to block Williams' re-entry, but FISA held a special vote to admit the champion.

Another mainstay on the Formula One circuit — the French Grand Prix — also was in trouble. The race was first wiped off the calendar because of new French anti-smoking laws. The event was reinstated after various amendments were passed to protect competitors with tobacco advertising on their cars.

Italian Cup

Milan, Juventus face Roma, Parma

MILAN (AP) — The last time AC Milan suffered a defeat, it was in an Italian Cup semifinal match against Juventus of Turin last April.

The 0-1 loss in a second leg game at Turin, following a goalless draw at home, eliminated Milan from the tournament.

Nearly one year later, and again in the Cup of Italy semifinals, AS Roma hopes for an upset victory to spoil Milan's hopes of a grand slam triumph.

The Milan powerhouse is shooting for its 13th league title and a fifth victory both in the European Champions Cup and in the Italian Cup this year.

Roma, unbeaten in the last seven league rounds, takes on Milan at Rome's Olympic Stadium Wednesday night.

Juventus, last year's losing finalist against Parma, plays cross-town rival Torino at Bari's Alpi Arena in another first leg semifinal.

Cup matches grant Torino and Roma the opportunity to avenge losses in league games earlier this season. Juventus downed Torino 2-1 and Milan defeated Roma 1-0 on the road.

Juventus, which is looking for a record ninth victory in the Italian Cup, will be without injured striker Pierluigi Casiraghi but will still field an impressive offense including Roberto Baggio, Andreas Moeller and Gianluca Vialli.

Vialli was rested in Sunday's League game against Napoli, which Juventus won 4-3. Its title hopes in the league



World champion Nigel Mansell (left, front) leads Brazil's Ayrton Senna (centre) and Riccardo Patrese (right, front) at the Australian Grand Prix, Nov. 1992 (AP photo)

The biggest changes in Formula One this year involve the drivers.

Mansell, an Englishman who won the drivers' title last season with victories in eight races, left Williams in a dispute over money and joined the Indy Car Circuit in the United States.

Prost, a three-time champion who sat out last year's season after being fired by Ferrari, has returned to replace Mansell at Williams. However, the Frenchman faces a possible suspension on March 18 — just four days after the South African Grand Prix — for criticising FISA.

Senna's situation was even more confused. The three time champion, who has been with the McLaren team, expressed interest in joining Williams this season. But Prost, his bitter rival, effectively vetoed that move.

With no place to go, Senna has been negotiating with McLaren for a new contract. The Brazilian tested the new McLaren MP4/5 car at Silverstone last week, posting some of the fastest times of the winter at the British track. The speculation ended Monday when McLaren announced that Senna would be driving for the team in South Africa.



Juventus stars (from left to right) Thomas Hassler, Julio Cesar and Roberto Baggio

long faded, Juventus is concentrating on the Italian Cup, which awards a berth in next season's European Cup winners Cup.

Torino will start a full strength team including Belgian midfielder Vincenzo Scifo and the Latin American duo of Walter Casagrande and Carlos Aguilera.

Big crowds are expected both in Turin and Rome.

AC Milan will miss several injured key players — Marco Van Basten, Frank Rijkaard, Roberto Donadoni and Mauro Tassotti — for Wednesday's match in Rome.

However Milan's roster of 25 players is rich with good substitutes such as Zvonimir Boban, Dejan Savicevic and Stefano Ernani.

French striker Jean Pierre

Papin, who scored nine goals in the last seven matches, will probably be rested Wednesday in view of Sunday's tough league match against Lazio and next week's champions Cup game with Porto.

Papin is expected to be replaced by young Italian forward Marco Simone who would team with Dutchman Rund Gullit, Croatian Boban and Savicevic of Montenegro.

Flaivy Argentine forward

Claudio Caniggia, who's nursing a leg injury, is a questionable starter for Roma.

German midfielder Thomas Haesler, considered one of the best foreign players in the Italian league, will be the man to watch for Milan's defense, masterminded by veteran Franco Baresi.

Both sides have some injury worries.

Barcelona are sure to be without Dutch midfielder Richard Witschge, who had to quit the Alba game with a recurring leg muscle injury.

Danish maestro Michael Laudrup is nursing a bruised left knee after Sunday's league match.

Since last month's I-I first leg draw, Barcelona have gone top of the Spanish league with a run of impressive victories while Bremen underlined their well-being with a 3-0 win over Karlsruhe last week which put them second in the Bundesliga.

While both teams' minds are very much on the league prospects, they are also determined to take the trophy which pits the European Cup bolders against the Cup Winners' Cup winners.

"The supercup brings prestige to a club and its players. We want to win it as this one is missing from our museum," said Barcelona striker Aitor Begiristain, who has hit scoring form recently and netted both goals in Sunday's 2-0 win at Alba.

Both sides have some injury worries.

Barcelona are sure to be without Dutch midfielder Richard Witschge, who had to quit the Alba game with a recurring leg muscle injury.

Danish maestro Michael Laudrup is nursing a bruised left knee after Sunday's league match.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: THE

Jumbles: GLORY TULLE NAUSEA HAMPER
Answer: What the back yard was to the laundress—
A HANGOUT

Answers tomorrow

Jumbles: GLORY TULLE NAUSEA HAMPER
Answer: What the back yard was to the laundress—
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Answer: What the back yard was to the laundress—
A HANGOUT

China opens first oil exchange

NANJING (R) — China opened its first oil futures exchange Tuesday, a key part of government reforms to move to a market-oriented economy.

At the sound of a brass bell, yellow-vested traders rushed to the red-carpeted trading floor of the Nanjing Petroleum Exchange to shout out prices.

The first symbolic trade was pre-arranged: 1,818 yuan for one contract of April gasoline — a price that rhymes with the Chinese saying: "It's easy to get rich."

The trade was the first real futures contract traded in China for any commodity, as it was a standardised contract cleared through a central system.

Market rules on supply and demand quickly took over and by the end of the morning session the April contract had moved to 1,868 yuan with volume of 35 contracts.

May, June, July and August contracts also traded with total morning volume of 223.

To compare with overseas markets, the exchange used a swap market rate of 8.22 yuan to the U.S. dollar Tuesday. The official rate Monday was 5.72 yuan to the dollar.

"China needs an oil exchange because at present the circulation of goods is very poor," Joseph Yip, the exchange's general manager, said in an interview.

"As a real futures exchange we will use prices to allocate resources between those who have products and those who need them," he pointed out.

Such an exchange is possible because China, which used to keep tight control of its economy, has moved to a free market system.

The Nanjing market joins two stock exchanges and numerous other commodity market at the

cutting edge of China's reforms. "We are moving towards a free market in oil," Mr. Yip said.

"The government can control prices on only a very small amount."

The exchange's 49 members come from all over China, including oil specialists, enterprises and speculators.

The exchange, which has timed its twice-daily trading sessions to dovetail with Singapore and London trading, wants to have foreign members eventually.

China's freer atmosphere means that Nanjing is not the only place in China wanting to start an oil exchange.

Shanghai and Beijing are among several cities planning major oil markets cooperating with some of the same state-owned oil giants that started the Nanjing exchange.

International tourism picked up in 1992, OECD says

PARIS (R) — International tourism in developed countries recovered last year after a rather flat 1991, when the Gulf war put some people off travelling, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) said Tuesday.

Tourism receipts in the OECD area, embracing 24 of the world's richest states, grew by 3.7 per cent in 1992 against 0.8 per cent in 1991 after adjusting for inflation and currency fluctuations.

The recovery took place "in spite of the continuing economic recession and the worsening of the conflict in what used to be Yugoslavia," it said. An agreement giving Yugoslavia special associate status in the OECD ended last year.

The OECD said that Europe in particular gained tourists in 1992, recovering some of the visitors lost to North America and Asia in 1991 due to the Gulf crisis. Receipts in real terms — discounting the overall level of inflation — rose by one per cent after a one per cent drop in 1991.

In Britain revenues increased by 1.9 per cent after a 13.6 per cent drop in 1991.

"This is partly attributable to the fall in the value of its currency and to an increased number of North American tourists (arrivals up 20 per cent)," the Paris-based think-tank for rich nations said.

The United States remained popular, with receipts up 9.8 per cent. The dollar's weakness against most European currencies

and the yen was a big factor. Canada saw three per cent fewer tourists arriving in 1992, with economic weakness in the United States, which provides 90 per cent of all visitors, the main reason.

"The six per cent rise in the value of the Canadian dollar against the U.S. dollar was a critical factor," it said.

Among Pacific OECD countries, Australia's tourist revenues rose by 8.6 per cent as European visitors came in large numbers and growing Asian economies provided more tourists.

Expenditure on travel to OECD and non-OECD countries rose by 16 per cent in 1992 to \$223 billion. The deficit on tourism of the OECD states widened to \$14 billion from \$3 billion.

Philadelphia starts banking operations next Wednesday

By Samir Shafiq
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Another phase of restructuring Jordan's banking system will be completed when the new Philadelphia Investment Bank opens for business next Wednesday following the merger last week between Jordan Finance House for Development and Investment and Darco for Investment and Housing.

The new investment bank was formally announced by the Comptroller of Companies on March 2. The comptroller said that an extraordinary general assembly meeting of the two former financial companies was held on Feb. 16, 1993 and that the final approval of merger was then endorsed.

As such, the minister of industry and trade approved the registration of the new investment bank and the cancellation of both former companies from the records.

Nasser Al Lozi, the general manager designated by the executive committee, or temporary board, to oversee the bank's affairs until a new board is elected, told the Jordan Times that Philadelphia Investment Bank has a JD 10 million capital at JD 1 par value per share.

The capital of the bank, which was registered at the Ministry of Industry and Trade as a public shareholding company under No. 224 on March 1, 1993, was allocated to be JD 7,119,861 or shares of (75 per cent) as being Jordan Finance House equity and JD 2,553,721 or shares as being the equity of Darco.

The remainder amount of JD 326,418 (shares) will most probably be put for private subscription to the shareholders of the new bank, because of the low volume, according to Mr. Lozi.

Mr. Lozi said that an ordinary general assembly meeting would take place Tuesday to elect nine board members and an auditor and hire a general manager. Next Wednesday would be the first business day under the new name, he added.

The Housing Bank had a large equity in Darco and will be an 18 per cent shareholder in the new bank. Other major shareholders would be Messers Isa Al Kazimi, Asad Al Asad and Mohammad Al Qirim.

Mr. Lozi said the new bank would be able to open new branches noting that Jordan Finance House had a permission in the past to open two branches.

The general manager, who might only retain his board membership next week, said that Philadelphia Investment Bank would be hiring highly qualified personnel and focusing on computerising all its operations in the next few months.

The last and final financial company awaiting restructuring is the Real Estate Financing Corporation (REFCO).

REFCO is expected to become a JD 4 million investment bank carrying the name: The Middle East Investment Bank.

Clinton issues plea for economic plan

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton appealed to Americans Monday to help him get his economic plan approved by Congress without sacrificing his plans for a short-term fiscal stimulus and for long-term investment.

The market is afraid the government (of Prime Minister Giuliano Amato) may not survive," said Robert Meyer of Milon brokers Intersim.

State television said Gabriele Cagliari, one of the most senior business figures to be implicated so far in a nationwide kickback probe, was arrested for corruption.

Financial markets had already

opened in nervous mood after

Mr. Amato said in a newspaper interview Tuesday that he had thought of resigning.

tion and breaking the law on political party financing.

The lira slid to around 972 to the German mark, from 955 on Monday night, while the share price index on the Milan Bourse was showing a fall of 4.6 per cent at mid-morning.

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Mr. Amato said in a newspaper interview Tuesday that he had thought of resigning.

"If anyone here... tells you that economy is fine in America, tell them that where you live there's still a little work that needs to be done," Mr. Clinton told his audience, an organisation of city and county government leaders.

He said this was the first economy recovery in his lifetime where the economic indicators are improving "but the jobs themselves are not yet being created."

Last week's improved unemployment report showing an unemployment rate of seven per cent, the lowest in a year, has led some on Capitol Hill to question the need for Mr. Clinton's stimulus, split between public jobs to repair roads and bridges and tax credits for companies that generate new jobs.

Mr. Clinton said that despite the encouraging economic news, "if you look behind those numbers, you see often those jobs are part-time."

Republicans have questioned

the need for the tax increases in his package while some Democrats have wanted to change the nature of the spending cuts.

The investment portion of his package calls for \$153 billion in new education, transportation and other spending. Mr. Clinton's overall plan calls for \$325 billion in deficit reduction over four years, \$186 billion in new taxes and \$153 billion in new spending.

Mr. Clinton has been able to rebuff complaints from the minority Republicans about his proposals. But opposition from members of his own Democratic Party could lead to some revision of his package.

Mr. Clinton, decrying the grid-

lock that gripped Washington when a Republican president and a Democratic-controlled Congress could not work together, said he was elected to bring change to Washington and would settle for nothing less.

"Let's do something," he shouted in his conclusion. "and let's do it now."

Opinion polls show Americans generally back Mr. Clinton's economic package, which includes an immediate \$30 billion stimulus, is needed despite more and more indications of an economy recovering on its own.

He rejected a position he attributed to Republicans that "all government spending is bad," insisting that there is a distinction to be made and that the "investments" he wants to make in job training and education are needed for the long-term health of the U.S. economy.

Democrats on the House of

Representatives' Budget Committee slashed \$63 billion from President Clinton's spending proposals Monday, although a few hours earlier he had agreed to a cut of only \$55 billion.

"The president's committed to making cuts and the first thing in the morning we'll take a look at the additional \$55 billion was not an inflexible number."

White House Press Secretary

Dee Dee Myers had said earlier the cuts were necessary because revised figures by the Congressional Budget Office showed that under Mr. Clinton's proposals, his plan to reduce the deficit by \$140 billion would fail short of the goal.

In years past the House has refused to consider anything approaching such a gigantic step.

But Mr. Clinton changed the calculus this year by proposing hundreds of billions of dollars of cuts, combined with new taxes, in an effort to reduce the budget deficit.

House Democrats on the budget committee caught the fever and decided to cut even deeper than Mr. Clinton suggested.

The proposal must pass the full

House and Senate before taking effect.

far they have always formed joint ventures with local partners to build and run plants.

Mr. Zhou, who is director of the ministry's department of major project equipment, said: "We welcome foreign businessmen to China to build wholly-owned power plants."

Speaking during a recent visit to Hong Kong, Mr. Zhou said power shortages were especially severe in major cities such as Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou. China's economy grew 12.8 per cent last year, more than twice the original target.

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- Excellent typing in Arabic and English.
- Excellent knowledge in fundamental computer and telex applications.
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Nabil Al Mashini Theatre
Presents as of March 17, 1993 the political comedy play
Definitely Democracy (Demokratiyya Wa Nuss)
Zawwad Wild Awwad Party
AHLAN THEATRE
New World Order
Plays continue daily at 9:00 p.m. except Saturdays and Sundays
Happy Feast

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at mid-session on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

One U.S. dollar	1.2434/39	Canadian dollar	Deutschmarks
1.6610/20	1.6610/20	Dutch guilders	Deutschmarks
1.8675/85	1.8675/85	Swiss francs	Deutschmarks
1.5370/80	1.5370/80	Belgian francs	Deutschmarks
34.180/230	34.180/230	French francs	Deutschmarks
5.6820/70	5.6820/70	Italian lire	Deutschmarks
1600/1605	1600/1605	Japanese yen	Deutschmarks
116.90/117.00	116.90/117.00	Swedish crowns	Deutschmarks
7.6050/150	7.6050/150	Norwegian crowns	Deutschmarks
7.0500/600	7.0500/600	Danish crowns	Deutschmarks
6.3700/800	6.3700/800		
One sterling	1.4415/25		
One ounce of gold	\$327.00/327.50		

French film about AIDS wins Cesars

PARIS (R) — For once at a film awards ceremony, the tears were very real and the usual platitudes about art transcending life were all too apt. The French Cinema Academy hailed an off-beat story of a bisexual with AIDS, "Les Nuits Fauves" (Savage Nights), as the best film of the year at Monday night's Cesar ceremony, the French equivalent of the Hollywood Oscars. But Cyril Collard, the man who wrote, directed and starred in the film, was not there to bask in his glory. He died of AIDS last Friday at the age of 35. It was an emotional evening, as one by one Collard's collaborators on the film, dressed in mourning, walked up the podium and broke down in tears as they paid tribute to him. "I carry this film with me forever, Cyril, it's given me strength, it's given me life... I hope that up there you have already found some film stock and a camera," said his co-star Romane Bohringer, who was named most promising actress. "Les Nuits Fauves" picked up four awards, including Best Film and Best First Film. It tells the story of Jean, a fast-living, promiscuous bisexual Parisian who falls in love with a 17-year-old girl but only has the courage to tell her he has AIDS after he has slept with her.



People carry away a man wounded by a shell which fell near the TV station in Sarajevo (AFP photo)

U.N. convoy stuck at Serbian border as Bosnia fighting continues

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — A U.N. relief convoy attempting to reach a trapped Muslim town in eastern Bosnia was stuck at the Serbian border Tuesday despite assurances from Bosnian Serb authorities that it would be allowed through.

In Bosnia itself fighting was continuing in Sarajevo and in the north, but there were no reports of battles in the east, where the government side had threatened a "counter-offensive to relieve blockaded Muslim settlements."

A spokeswoman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Belgrade said the convoy of a dozen trucks carrying medical aid was stopped on the bridge at the Serbian border town of Mali Zvornik.

"We are seeking clarification — with those on the spot and at a higher level — of the agreement reached yesterday," spokeswoman Lyndall Sachs told Reuters.

The commander of U.N. troops in Bosnia, General Philippe Morillon, said Monday after talks with local Serb leaders that the authorities had agreed to let the convoy through to the Muslim settlement of Konjic Polje, under Serb siege for 10 months, to evacuate the sick and wounded.

Later Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic said his forces would allow all aid convoys through to eastern Bosnia.

Ms. Sachs said the convoy, driven by Swedish firemen

trained in first aid, had planned to evacuate 75 people from Konjic Polje to the nearby Muslim stronghold of Tuzla.

Gen. Morillon said Monday that the same convoy had also been given permission to go to the town of Srebrenica, with 60,000 inhabitants including refugees from other fallen settlements, Thursday.

A UNHCR official and a World Health Organisation doctor who trekked to Srebrenica at the weekend said 2,000 people were sick and were dying at the rate of up to 30 each day. At least 9,000 were seeking evacuation, they said.

Gen. Morillon himself was in Sarajevo Tuesday trying to end the latest upsurge in fighting and get U.N. monitors stationed in eastern Bosnia.

At the same time U.N. officials Tony Land and Victor Andreyev were talking to Bosnian Serb leaders at their headquarters in Pale near Sarajevo to try to flesh out an agreement to principle struck by Gen. Morillon Monday to open humanitarian corridors to eastern Bosnia.

Fighting continued in Sarajevo, with activity concentrated on the western suburbs of Stup, Ilidza and Butmir and the road to the airport, which was closed three times Monday due to shelling.

Bosnian radio also reported shelling of Muslim positions in Brcko and Gradačac in the north of the country, while Belgrade-based Tanjug News Agency re-

ported clashes between Serb forces and Croatian army regiments in the south.

Meanwhile, U.S. planes dropped more than 40 tonnes of supplies over the town of Srebrenica early Tuesday in the ninth airdrop mission to eastern Bosnia, the American military said.

The U.S. European Command said in a statement the airdrops were focused for the fourth straight time on the town of Srebrenica.

"Gorazde was also chosen because of its rapidly increasing refugee population and our intent to supplement relief assistance when sufficient supplies cannot be delivered by overland convoys," it said.

Sarajevo also received supplies Tuesday as three U.S. C-130s airtight in 87 tonnes of supplies and food. Since the flights began last July, U.S. aircraft have airlifted over 9,000 tonnes of supplies, food and equipment into the besieged Bosnian capital, the statement added.

Bosnian Muslims see snags in an internationally-mediated peace plan but have been promised improvements if an agreement is reached, Bosnian Foreign Minister Haris Silajdzic said Tuesday.

"In the New York talks, we have been given important assurances from the United States and the international community that many things will change if a peace agreement is reached," Mr. Silajdzic told reporters on his arrival

in Ankara.

Her said the major snag in the plan laid out by mediators Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen was that it allows continued Serbian control over territory seized in the 10-month-old war in Bosnia.

The peace talks in New York were interrupted Saturday to give the Bosnian Muslim government and its Bosnian Serb adversaries time to decide whether they accept the map redrawing Bosnia into 10 semi-autonomous regions.

Mr. Silajdzic arrived in Ankara on an unannounced visit for talks with Turkish Foreign Minister Hilmet Cetin.

U.S. special envoy to the former Yugoslavia Reginald Bartholomew said Monday that any U.S. force under U.N. supervision would follow a peace settlement.

"I think that we don't contemplate that sort of thing (using troops) at this point in time. What we're working on is the kind of diplomatic and strategy of pressure that I have described," he said on U.S. public television.

"But the basic sizing and structuring of a force that we're talking about putting in there is keyed to a workable settlement. And that's what we're trying to get right now," he added.

The United States may be taking a more aggressive stance against Serbian advances in Bosnia, but it remains cool to the kind of military intervention U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali has in mind.

"I think badly needs the backing of the heads of Russia's semi-autonomous regional republics to press his plan for a power-sharing deal with the Congress of People's Deputies.

Regional leaders have told him they are opposed to a constitutional referendum planned for April. But most said at a meeting with parliamentary chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov Monday the Congress should bow to Mr. Yeltsin and allow it to go ahead.

If Congress, as seems likely, cancels the referendum and rejects the power-sharing deal, Mr. Yeltsin could find himself seriously hampered in his market reforms.

Mr. Khasbulatov insists the re-

ferendum, which Mr. Yeltsin says should let people choose whether they want a fully-fledged presidential republic, could tear the country apart.

Mr. Yeltsin, in what seemed like an off-the-cuff threat to suspend the constitution and impose presidential rule, said last week he could take a "final option" of measures to end the row if the two sides did not reach a compromise.

Congress dealt him a heavy blow in December, clipping his powers and forcing him to drop reformist acting Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar.

Some foreign observers say the situation in Russia is more unstable than at any time since a failed bardine coup in 1991, which triggered the collapse of the Soviet Union.

U.S. President Bill Clinton arranged to meet former President Richard Nixon Monday to

discuss the Russian crisis.

Mr. Nixon said last week after a visit to Russia that Mr. Yeltsin's reformist government would not survive without more Western aid.

Mr. Yeltsin is seeking strong presidential powers to push through his reforms against resistance in parliament.

After his meeting with republicans, the president was due to meet district administrators and the heads of parliamentary factions in a flurry of pre-Congress lobbying.

Government members complain their plans are constantly undermined by parliamentary control over key levers of economic policy, especially the Central Bank.

Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, a man with broad authority among the country's industrial leaders, has thrown his support fully behind Mr. Yeltsin.

PORT ORANGE, Florida (R) — A state court has been asked to decide whether movie star John Travolta is keeping his neighbors awake with his large private jet. Some residents at the exclusive Spruce Creek fly-in development have sued Travolta, an avid aviator who starred in *Urban Cowboy*, *Saturday Night Fever* and *Grease*. Some Spruce Creek homeowners object to the noisy, 50,000-pound (22,700 kg) airplane he used to commute to his luxurious Florida home. "It's a big, big plane," said Stephen Ponder, a lawyer representing the Home Owners Association. "It looks like a commercial jet that seats 30 to 40 people." The upscale community near Orlando has its own private airstrip, and restricts airplanes to a 12,500-pound (5,700 kg) limit, a restriction enacted after Travolta bought his Gulfstream G-2 plane. The restriction was not meant specifically to target him, Mr. Ponder said. "This is a question of safety and welfare for the community," he said. A preliminary hearing is planned in staff court Wednesday.

Neighbours sue Travolta over size of his airplane

LOS ANGELES (R) — The Khmer Rouge, which holds about a fourth of the country, has refused to join the May 23 election.

Mr. Kohl said the Khmer Rouge should be excluded from the elections and a subsequent Cambodian government.

The resolution also expressed Council "readiness" to support the result of the elections for a constituent assembly which will lead to the formation of a new government "for all Cambodians" by September.

"In voting for the resolution, we have committed ourselves to supporting only the government which will emerge from the elections as the sole legitimate authority for all of Cambodia," said U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright.

The Khmer Rouge, which holds about a fourth of the country, has refused to join the May 23 election.

Meanwhile, five more Vietnamese soldiers have been found in Cambodia and should be deported immediately, the head of the U.N. peacekeeping mission told Cambodian leaders Tuesday.

The survey, which covered a representative sample of 2,264 people, was carried out in January.

The anti-foreigner Republicans, who are under official investigation on suspicion of being anti-democratic, won 8.3 per cent of the vote in local elections in Hesse state Sunday.

It was the first barometer of voter sympathies after 17 people died in a wave of right-wing violence against foreign residents

resulting from the recent anti-immigrant protests.

The Republicans, who are under official investigation on suspicion of being anti-democratic, won 8.3 per cent of the vote in local elections in Hesse state Sunday.

The Social Democrats (SPD), the main opposition party in Bonn, could muster only 36.4 per cent in Hesse, one of their traditional power bases. The Liberal Free Democrats (FDP), junior partners in Mr. Kohl's coalition, had 5.1 per cent.

Mr. Kohl also attacked the FDP and its leader Otto Lambsdorff for their role in government.

"He should look at himself if he's complaining about ineffective government," Mr. Kohl said of Mr. Lambsdorff.

He said leadership wrangles in the FDP after the resignation of former Foreign Minister Hans-Dieter Genscher last year had not helped.

"One rarely sees party leaders acting quite so clumsily," Mr. Kohl said.

The chancellor said he hoped the SPD, which plunged 8.4 percentage points from the last local polls in 1989, would take the result to heart.

He said he hoped it would now stop blocking progress on a "solidarity pact" for economic recovery and the reactivation of former Communist east Germany.

Mr. Kohl needs a deal with the right-wing Republicans in Hesse. The Republicans, led by a former soldier in Hitler's Waffen-SS, won up to 15 per cent in some areas in the first test of voter sympathies since last year's wave of anti-foreigner violence.

The Republicans, who are under official investigation on suspicion of being anti-democratic, won 8.3 per cent of the vote in local elections in Hesse state Sunday.

The Social Democrats (SPD), the main opposition party in Bonn, could muster only 36.4 per cent in Hesse, one of their traditional power bases.

It is important for North Korea to allow nuclear inspections," Mr. Miyazawa told the Upper House Budget Committee.

He said Japan should regard the inspections as the biggest issue in talks between Tokyo and Pyongyang on normalising relations.

On Feb. 25, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) gave North Korea one month to respond to the demand for access to the sites at Yongbyon, 100 kilometres northwest of Pyongyang.

North Korea rejected the IAEA demands, saying the move would be a serious violation of its sovereignty.

Pyongyang insists the installations at Yongbyon are conventional military sites and not subject to IAEA inspection.

"North Korea under nuclear suspicion poses a threat not only to South Korea but also to Japan," Mr. Miyazawa said.

As long as Pyongyang refused to allow nuclear inspections, it would never clear doubts among the international community over its nuclear programme, he added.

Talks on normalisation of relations between Japan and North Korea broke up during the eighth round in Peking in November. New talks have not been scheduled.

North Korea has warned Japan that it would not resume normalisation talks if Tokyo continued to demand that Pyongyang completely give up its nuclear weapons.

Pyongyang has insisted that the IAEA demands.

ULAN BATOR (R) — A 28-year-old Canadian who swindled his way to the top of Mongolia's society was pardoned by the president and released from jail.

Timothy Flynn talked his way into the state guest house, flew free on the national airline and even had an official Mercedes limousine at his beck and call. He passed himself off variously as the heir to Canada's largest family fortune, son of Newfoundland's provincial governor and distributor of Canadian aid, but landed in jail for five years last September for fraud and "boycottism." The Mongolian president pardoned him after his family said he suffered from schizophrenia.

U.N. approves Cambodia elections

UNITED NATIONS (R) — China, an ally of Cambodia's Khmer Rouge, joined 14 other Security Council members Monday in endorsing the country's May elections without the participation of the radical guerrillas.

The Council's resolution, adopted unanimously, was the first time China had supported the U.N. peace process since it became clear that the Khmer Rouge would be excluded from the elections and a subsequent Cambodian government.

The resolution also expressed Council "readiness" to support the result of the elections for a constituent assembly which will lead to the formation of a new government "for all Cambodians" by September.

"In voting for the resolution, we have committed ourselves to supporting only the government which will emerge from the elections as the sole legitimate authority for all of Cambodia," said U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright.

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Nurse Carol Edwards said officer Laurence Powell told Mr. King police had "played a little hard ball" with him, and had "bit a few home runs." A home run is the biggest hit possible in the U.S. national sport, which is played with a bat and ball.

She said Mr. King, who was expected to take the witness stand Tuesday, was not sweating and showed no signs of being under the influence of the drug PCP, as Officer Powell and his colleagues had testified in their California trial.

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He is likely to remain on the stand for about two days. Prosecutors say they expect to question him for about 20 to 30 minutes, but defence lawyers say their cross-examination will last a day and a half.

Prosecution lawyers had at first said they expected Mr. King to testify later Monday, but revised their estimates.

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